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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 2111
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE 0200
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA IMMEDIATE 0212
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 0691
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 0500
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU IMMEDIATE 0207
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 0368
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 1889
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000479

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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [EAID](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: SCA DAS FEIGENBAUM MEETING WITH KYRGYZ ADVISOR
RYSKULOV

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Classified By: Amb. Marie L. Yovanovitch, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. In an April 19 meeting with SCA DAS Evan Feigenbaum, recently-nominated Presidential Foreign Policy Advisor Islan Ryskulov said he sought improved dialogue and cooperation with the United States. He asked for assistance moving forward on U.S. funding for the Kyrgyz Threshold Country program under the Millennium Challenge Account, expressed interest in U.S. initiatives to help transmit Central Asian electricity to markets in South Asia, and highlighted the importance of U.S. assistance in developing Kyrgyzstan's economy. He reaffirmed Kyrgyz government support for Manas Air Base, but noted that U.S. punishment of the U.S. airman involved in the December shooting incident would help deflect public criticism of the base. End Summary.

Kyrgyzstan wants good relations, help with MCC

¶2. (C) On April 19, SCA DAS Evan Feigenbaum, accompanied by the Ambassador and the DCM, met with Presidential Foreign Policy Advisor Islan Ryskulov. Ryskulov, who was appointed barely two weeks earlier, commented that the then-ongoing opposition demonstrations in Bishkek were a sign of democracy in Kyrgyzstan. He expressed hope that the opposition and President could negotiate an end to the crisis. Ryskulov, who spoke in English and whose last diplomatic assignment was to Pakistan, added that in his 20 years as a career diplomat, he has always had good relations with U.S. representatives, and looks forward to continuing to do so in his new capacity. He said Kyrgyzstan was prepared to discuss and reach agreement "on all issues" of cooperation, and wanted good relations with all western countries. Ryskulov noted in

particular his desire to move forward with Kyrgyzstan's proposed Millennium Challenge Corporation Threshold Country program, which is awaiting MCC Board approval for funding.

U.S. Supports Kyrgyzstan, seeks commitment to reform

13. (C) DAS Feigenbaum reviewed the strong U.S. support for Kyrgyz independence for the past 15 years, highlighting the broad nature of our bilateral engagement. He also outlined the challenges ahead to keep relations constructive, realize the largely untapped potential for increased economic and trade ties, and for Kyrgyzstan to emerge from the current political crisis peacefully, and with strengthened democratic institutions and respect for rule of law. Regarding MCC, DAS Feigenbaum noted that he is asked two questions about Kyrgyzstan: does it have the political will to carry out the Threshold Country program, which is targeted against corruption; and does it have the stability in key personnel to follow through with the program over time? DAS Feigenbaum suggested that Kyrgyzstan could help demonstrate its commitment to reform by taking several steps now in advance of a funding decision by the MCC board.

Interest in regional energy markets

14. (C) Ryskulov responded that President Bakiyev had recently agreed to take "serious" reform steps, such as making the state television, KTR, a "public" company that would be independent of government censorship. He added that Kyrgyzstan needed to discuss and resolve fundamental political questions that would determine the future of the country. For example, what kind of system -- presidential or parliamentary -- should define the state? He noted that a government meeting had recently endorsed the Country Development Strategy, where a primary goal was to combat poverty through economic development and an emphasis on civil

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society. He said he hoped the U.S. would support the strategy, which will be published soon. He added that economic cooperation was critical to economic development, and cited the advantages of selling electricity to markets in Pakistan, where prices were five or more times higher than in Central Asia. Ryskulov was aware that U.S. companies were interested in this potential, and hoped the Embassy would support developing these potential markets.

15. (C) DAS Feigenbaum replied that the U.S. was very excited about developing a regional energy market, and very active. He noted upcoming World Bank/Asian Development Bank visits to promote this idea, and encouraged Ryskulov to contact the U.S. energy firm AES. He added that the President's recent reform steps, including regarding KTR, were very encouraging. But the key, he added, is whether and how they are implemented, and how quickly.

Manas Air Base

16. (C) DAS Feigenbaum asked Ryskulov for his views on the issues surrounding Manas Air Base. Ryskulov said that Kyrgyzstan responded to 9/11 and supported the Global War on Terrorism by hosting Manas Air Base. "The base will remain," Ryskulov said. He added that President Bakiyev has confirmed his commitment to the base as long as the struggle continues in Afghanistan. "The stability of Afghanistan needs support first," he said, "then we can discuss the terms of the base." Regarding the December 6 shooting incident, Ryskulov said that what is needed is "an objective investigation." He underlined that, from the Presidency's perspective, "punishment (of the U.S. airman) will be very important" to be able to deal with public hostility towards the base.

17. (C) DAS Feigenbaum noted that the U.S. investigation continues, and we do not know what conclusions it will reach. He noted that the base is in the strategic interests of both Kyrgyzstan and the U.S. In light of the incidents that have

occurred, the U.S. has taken steps to ensure that the base operates safely, and continues to work on solutions to other base-related issues. He added that base personnel volunteer and contribute to surrounding communities, and want to do more. In addition, the base is looking at ways to increase local-sourcing of supplies and consumables at the base. Finally, the U.S. welcomed the Kyrgyz proposal last December to set up a joint committee to discuss base issues, and is ready to meet at any time to establish the group.

Bio Data/Comment

18. (C) The meeting took place inside the White House the afternoon before police swept demonstrators clear of the central square downtown, but Ryskulov's comments on the situation all focused on the need for dialogue and a negotiated resolution. Ryskulov spoke English throughout the meeting, which is rare among Kyrgyz officials. He was most recently the Kyrgyz Consul General in Karachi (hence his English and interest in energy exports to South Asia) and served twice in Germany for a total of five years; the last time as DCM to Apas Djumagulov, the current Kyrgyz Ambassador to Moscow. He was aware of and interested in both the MCC Threshold Country Program, and our efforts to promote regional energy cooperation and electricity exports to South Asian markets. He has clearly been tasked with improving relations with the U.S. and other western donors.
YOVANOVITCH